

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed October 30, 2006 (hereinafter referred to as "the Office Action"), Applicant submits the foregoing amendments and following remarks. The Office Action stated claims 9, 12-16, and 20-27 are allowed, and claim 2 is objected to. Claim 2 is re-written as an independent claim, claims 3, 4, 7, and 8 are amended to depend from claim 2, and rejected claims 1, 5, 6, 10, and 17-19 are cancelled. In light of the foregoing amendments, Applicant respectfully asserts that now-pending claims 2-4, 7-9, 12-16, and 20-27 are in condition for allowance.

Claim Amendments

The Office Action indicated Claim 2 was rejected as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if re-written as an independent claim including all limitations of the base claim 1. Claim 2 was so amended and is now in condition for allowance. Claims 3, 4, 7, and 8 were amended to depend from allowable re-written claim 2. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits claims 3, 4, 7, and 8 are in condition for allowance for at least the same reason(s) as claim 2.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), 102(e) and §103(a)

Claims 1, 3, 7 and 17-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Furukawa (US 5,173,575); Claims 1, 3, 7 and 17-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(e) as being anticipated by Morkerken (US 7,011,178); Claims 4 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Furukawa (US 5,173,575) and Morkerken (US 7,011,178).

Applicant traverses these rejections. However, to facilitate issuance of the allowable and allowed claims, Applicant cancels claims 1, 5, 6, 10, and 17-19 without prejudice and reserves the right to pursue such claims in a subsequent application.

CONCLUSION

The applicant has endeavored to address all of the Examiner's concerns as expressed in the outstanding Office Action. Accordingly, amendments to the claims for patentability purposes pursuant to statutory section 102 and 103, the reasons therefor, and arguments in support of the patentability of the pending claim set are presented above. In light of these amendments and

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remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of any outstanding rejections, and allowance of pending claims 2-4, 7-9, 12-16, and 20-27.

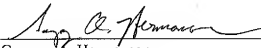
If the Examiner has any questions which may be answered by telephone, he is invited to call the undersigned at (619) 687-8610.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

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By: 
Gregory A. Hermanson
Registration No. 53,018
Attorney of Record
Customer No. 20,995
(619) 235-8550

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